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TEA Issues Comprehensive Guidelines for a Safe Return to On-Campus Instruction for the 2020-21 School Year

Agency to Ensure Remote Instruction is Available to All Who Need It or Request It

AUSTIN, Texas – July 7, 2020 – The Texas Education Agency today announced comprehensive guidelines for students to return to school, prioritizing their health and safety while ensuring that students receive quality instruction, whether they choose to learn in a safe on-campus environment or remotely.

“Both as Commissioner and as a public school parent, my number one priority is the health and safety of our students, teachers, and staff,” said Texas Education Commissioner Mike Morath. “That is why the guidance laid out today will provide flexibility to both parents and districts to make decisions based on the ever-changing conditions of this public health crisis. The state is and remains committed to providing a high-quality education to all Texas students, while ensuring the health and safety of students, teachers, staff, and families.”

Morath added that, despite what will be a challenging budget year, Governor Greg Abbott, Lt. Governor Dan Patrick, Speaker Dennis Bonnen, and other legislative leaders are committed to fully funding in-class and remote instruction for every child in the upcoming school year. As a result, parents will have more choices than normal this year as they decide which school setting is best for their children, including:

- **Daily on-campus learning will be available to all parents who would like their students to learn in school each day.**
 - In addition, all parents will have the option to choose remote learning for their children, initially, or at any point as the year progresses. Parents who choose remote instruction for their students may be asked to commit to remote instruction for a full grading period (e.g. 6 or 9 weeks), but will not have to make that commitment more than two weeks in advance, so they can make a decision based on the latest public health information.
- **Health and safety procedures will be in place to support student and teacher safety.**
 - Some health procedures are mandated for every school in the state. For example, all students, teachers, staff, and visitors coming to campus must be screened before being allowed on campus. Consistent with the Governor’s most recent executive order, and assuming that order is still in place, masks will be required while in school buildings, with certain exceptions made, as noted in the order. Schools will also be required to follow any forthcoming executive orders issued by the Governor.
 - Additional health procedures are recommended for every school that can reasonably implement those procedures.

- Districts have the option to establish a phased-in return to on-campus instruction for up to the first three weeks of the school year, to ensure all appropriate health and safety procedures are fully in place.
- **TEA is providing school systems with resources to ensure a strong start. This includes:**
 - Reimbursement for extra COVID-19-related expenses incurred during the 2019-20 school year;
 - Tens of millions of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) supplies provided to school systems at no cost to Texas schools;
 - Free online, TEKS-aligned learning tools to deliver remote instruction;
 - Teacher training provided at no cost to the school system; and
 - Statewide efforts to help bridge the digital divide for students at home, along with other ongoing support.

For more information, please visit TEA's Coronavirus website: <https://tea.texas.gov/coronavirus>

A link to the Texas Education Agency's comprehensive public health guidance can be found [here](#).

This framework was developed based on the most current science with input from: Governor Greg Abbott's Coronavirus Medical Advisory Team; the Governor's Strike Force to Reopen Texas; Texas school system leaders; ongoing global analysis of school operational practices; ongoing global analysis of research on viral spread in schools; and the latest peer-reviewed viral research studies.

Due to the nature of this pandemic, parents and educators should expect to see some campuses close for brief periods during the upcoming school year. If there are significant changes to the public health situation, there may need to be additional changes to the framework as well.

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